

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TUNIS 03886 01 OF 02 311100Z
ACTION INR-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-11 ISO-00 EUR-12 ARA-10 CIAE-00
NSAE-00 INRE-00 SSO-00 AF-10 SP-02 SS-15 PM-05
NSCE-00 /076 W

-----020285 311108Z /15

O 311030Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1290

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 TUNIS 3886

E. O. 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: CU, UR, TS, MPOL
SUBJ: SOVIET AND CUBAN ROLE IN AFRICA

REF: STATE 134913

FOLLOWING HURRIED REPLY TO REFTEL IS BASED ON OUR UNDER-
STANDING OF ESTABLISHED VIEWS OF GOT, ON RECENT CONVERSATIONS
WE HAVE HAD WITH GOT OFFICIALS AT VARIOUS LEVELS AND ON
EDITORIAL AND MEDIA TREATMENT GIVEN CURRENT DIFFICULTIES IN
ZAIRE.

1. GOT PERCEPTIONS OF THE SOVIET AND CUBAN ROLE IN AFRICA.
TUNISIA SEES INCREASED SOVIET AND CUBAN PRESENCE IN AFRICA
AS A POTENTIAL DANGER TO AREA STABILITY AND INDIRECTLY, AS
A THREAT TO THE SECURITY OF SOME OF THE MODERATE AFRICAN
REGIMES WHICH SHARE A GENERALLY COMMON WORLD VIEW WITH
TUNISIA. THE GOT ENJOYS "CORRECT" RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIETS,
EVEN TO THE POINT OF ALLOWING NAVAL VISITS FROM TIME TO TIME
AND LIMITED ACCESS TO SHIP REPAIR FACILITIES IN BIZERTE
(MENZEL BOURGUIBA). IT ALSO ACCEPTS ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE
FROM MOSCOW, AND PARTICIPATES IN ACTIVE BILATERAL CULTURAL
EXCHANGE PROGRAM. TUNISIA ACCEPTS NO MILITARY AID FROM THE
SOVIETS, HOWEVER, AND CLOSELY MONITORS THE ACTIVITIES OF
SOVIET EMBASSY AND AID PERSONNEL IN TUNISIA. THIS IN A NUTSHELL

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 TUNIS 03886 01 OF 02 311100Z

IS EXACTLY THE POLICY THE GOT WOULD LIKE TO SEE ALL AFRICAN
COUNTRIES FOLLOW WITH RESPECT TO USSR. ALTHOUGH THE GOT
RECOGNIZES THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT, IT HAS NO DIRECT RELATIONS
WITH HAVANA NOR IS IT SEARCHING FOR ANY. THERE IS AGREEMENT
AT ALMOST EVERY LEVEL OF THE TUNISIAN GOVERNMENT THAT
CUBA HAS FEW LEGITIMATE INTERESTS IN AFRICA AND THAT
CUBA'S RECENT APPEARANCE ON THE CONTINENT IS A TOTALLY

NEGATIVE DEVELOPMENT. SPECIFICALLY, IT IS WIDELY BELIEVED THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF CUBAN MACHISMO AND THAT HAVANA IS MERELY SERVING AS A FRONT FOR THE POLICIES CONCEIVED IN MOSCOW.

2. TUNISIAN DEFINITION OF ATTENDANT PROBLEMS. TUNISIA VIEWS ITS BASIC SECURITY AS BEING TIED TO A STRONG WESTERN PRESENCE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN. IN THE THINKING OF THE GOT, THIS DEMANDS THE PRESERVATION OF WESTERN INFLUENCE (PRINCIPALLY U.S. AND FRANCE) IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND IN AFRICA. SOVIET AND CUBAN INCURSIONS ANYWHERE IN THESE REGIONS, EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, ARE CONSEQUENTLY VIEWED AS A THREAT TO THIS SENSE OF ORDER AND STABILITY. THE GOT IS CONVINCED THAT THE SOVIETS AND THEIR CUBAN SURROGATES ARE SEEKING TO SUPPLANT THIS WESTERN INFLUENCE WITH THEIR OWN, AND THAT BOTH THE SOVIETS AND THE CUBANS ARE PREPARED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ANY AREA CONFLICT IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THIS END. THIS OPPORTUNISM CAN ONLY BE DIVISIVE, AS IT TENDS TO AGGRAVATE RATHER THAN ENCOURAGE PEACEFUL RESOLUTIONS OF DIFFERENCES. IN ADDITION TO CONCERN ABOUT THE GEOPOLITICAL ASPECTS OF SUCH SOVIET/CUBAN ENCROACHMENT IN AFRICA, THE GOT IS EQUALLY APPREHENSIVE ABOUT THE INTRODUCTION AND/OR SPREAD OF MARXISM -- WHICH IS ANATHEMA TO TUNISIA'S PRO-WESTERN AND VAGUELY SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL ORIENTATION.

SECRET

NNN

SECRET

PAGE 01 TUNIS 03886 02 OF 02 311123Z
ACTION INR-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-11 ISO-00 EUR-12 ARA-10 CIAE-00
NSAE-00 INRE-00 SSO-00 AF-10 SP-02 SS-15 PM-05
NSCE-00 /076 W

-----020438 311127Z /15

O 311031Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1291

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 TUNIS 3886

3. PRESCRIPTION FOR HANDLING THE PROBLEMS. TUNISIA'S VIEWS ON THIS POINT ARE RELATIVELY UNCOMPLICATED. SPECIFICALLY, THE GOT BELIEVES THAT THE WEST MUST PLAY A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN DEFENDING ITS INTERESTS IN AFRICA. THE GOT STILL BELIEVES THAT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD HAVE COME IN SOONER AND MORE FORCEFULLY IN ANGOLA AND THAT IT SHOULD

HAVE WORKED WITH GREATER TENACITY IN COMBATING LEFTIST ADVANCES. THE GOT HOPES THAT IN VIEW OF THE INCREASINGLY VISIBLE SOVIET/CUBAN PRESENCE IN AFRICA, THESE "MISTAKES" WILL NOT BE REPEATED. PARTIALLY FOR THIS REASON, GOT REACTION TO FRENCH/BELGIAN INTERVENTION IN ZAIRE WAS POSITIVE. WITH POTENTIALLY UNFRIENDLY NEIGHBORS ON EITHER SIDE OF IT, TUNISIA CAN EASILY ENVISAGE IT ALSO MIGHT SOME DAY HAVE TO LOOK TO PARIS OR WASHINGTON FOR SUPPORT AGAINST SOVIET-ENCOURAGED ATTACKS DIRECTED FROM EITHER TRIPOLI OR ALGIERS. SUCH PROMPT REACTIONS ON PART OF FRENCH IS PARTICULARLY COMFORTING. OFFICIAL PRESS HAS DESCRIBED FRENCH AS BEING "ONLY ALTERNATE POWER" (TO U.S.) CAPABLE OF CONTROLLING SITUATION IN AFRICA. GOVERNMENT PAPERS HAVE ALSO CITE "BIG

POWER INTERVENTION" AS SOURCE OF AFRICA'S DISQUIET, AND WHILE SOVIET UNION IS SELDOM CRITICIZED PUBLICLY, LITTLE DOUBT IS LEFT AS TO WHAT "BIG POWERS" IT VIEWS AS THE CULPRITS.

4. SOVIET/CUBAN ROLE AS DIVISIVE ISSUE. GOT APPEARS TO
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 TUNIS 03886 02 OF 02 311123Z

VIEW SOVIETS AND CUBANS AS TAKING ADVANTAGE OF EXISTING DIVISIONS, RATHER THAN IN CREATING NEW ONES PER SE. THIS MAY BE HAIRSPPLITTING, HOWEVER, AS RESULT IS MUCH THE SAME, I.E. THAT AFRICA'S MANY PROBLEMS ARE MADE MORE COMPLICATED RATHER THAN LESS SO BY PRESENCE OF SOVIETS AND CUBANS IN AFRICA.

5. A WORD OF CAUTION. WE BELIEVE ABOVE OBSERVATIONS ACCURATELY REFLECT PREVAILING VIEWS WITHIN GOT. BECAUSE OF TUNISIA'S SELF-PROCLAIMED NON-ALIGNMENT AND ITS CLOSELY ADHERED TO POLICY OF SEEKING AMICABLE RELATIONS WITH BOTH EAST AND WEST, IT CANNOT BE EXPECTED TO TAKE POSITION OF LEADERSHIP IN ANY CAMPAIGN TO OUST CUBANS OR SOVIETS FROM AFRICA. WE CAN EXPECT, HOWEVER, THAT TUNISIA WOULD QUIETLY SUPPORT ANY WESTERN-ORCHESTRATED ACTIONS AIMED AT REDUCING OR CHECKING SOVIET/CUBAN INFLUENCE IN THE CONTINENT. IN ADDITION, WE WOULD EXPECT THAT THE GOT WOULD ASSOCIATE ITSELF WITH ANY BRODLY SPONSORED MOVEMENT OF MODERATE AFRICAN STATES ARRIVING AT A GENERAL POLICY OF NON-INTERVENTION, EVEN IF THE FINGER OF ACCUSAL CLEARLY POINTED AT THE CUBANS AND THE SOVIETS.
MULCAHY

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INTERVENTION, POLITICAL SUMMARIES, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, THREATS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 31 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978TUNIS03886
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X3
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780227-0158
Format: TEL
From: TUNIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978051/aaaaaajz.tel
Line Count: 163
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 8e51be92-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION INR
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 134913
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2503283
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOVIET AND CUBAN ROLE IN AFRICA
TAGS: MPOL, CU, UR, TS
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/8e51be92-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014